

RELEASED IN PART B1,1.4(D),B6
--

ACTION EUR-00

INFO LOG-00 NP-00 AID-00 AMAD-00 USNW-00 CIAE-00 INL-00
 DNI-00 DODE-00 DOEE-00 DOTE-00 PERC-00 DS-00 EB-00
 OIGO-00 FAAE-00 FBIE-00 H-00 TEDE-00 INR-00 IO-00
 LAB-01 L-00 M-00 DCP-00 NRC-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
 OES-00 OIC-00 NIMA-00 PA-00 GIWI-00 PRS-00 P-00
 FMPC-00 SP-00 IRM-00 SSO-00 SS-00 STR-00 TRSE-00
 SA-00 R-00 SCRS-00 DSCC-00 PRM-00 DRL-00 G-00
 NFAT-00 SAS-00 SWCI-00 /001W
 -----21DE60 051513Z /38

P 051545Z AUG 05
 FM AMEMBASSY BAKU
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8112
 INFO ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY COOPERATION IN EUROPE

CONFIDENTIAL BAKU 001172

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/05/2015
 TAGS: KDEM, PHUM, PGOV, PINR, AJ
 SUBJECT: AZERBAIJAN: SPOTLIGHT ON YOUTH GROUPS -- SOME TALK
 OF REVOLUTION

REF: A. BAKU 939
 B. BAKU 787

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Robert Homme, Senior Reviewer
--

Classified By: AMBASSADOR RENO HARNISH FOR REASONS 1.4 B AND D.

1. (C) SUMMARY: With parliamentary elections scheduled for November, Azerbaijan's few independent youth groups are looking to play an active role in the campaign. With the detention of the leader of one of these organizations on charges of fomenting &revolution8 (see septel), youth organizations are definitely in the political spotlight. These fledgling organizations have attempted to gain visibility and recruit members through a variety of means, from launching websites to spray painting slogans to participating at opposition rallies. Two of the most prominent of these organizations are &Yokh8 (meaning &no,8 and pronounced like &yoh8 and written &yox8 in Azerbaijani) and &Yeni Fikir8 (New Idea), whose leader was the one detained by government authorities. Approximately 150 members from the Yokh movement turned out for the June 18 opposition rally in Baku (ref A). Yokh claims that it wants to promote and teach non-violent resistance to the current "anti-democratic" regime. Yeni Fikir claims to have established itself at several universities; its members have distributed leaflets criticizing the government for corruption. These movements have modeled themselves on youth movements in other countries of the former Soviet Union, such as Ukraine's "Pora" and Georgia's "Kmara." Accordingly, the GOAJ has an intense interest in their activities.

1.4(D)
 B1

Classification Extended on : 09/11/2013 ~ Class: CONFIDENTIAL ~ Authority: DSCG 11-1 ~ ☐ Declassify on: 8-5-2025
--

1.4(D)
B1

[REDACTED] END SUMMARY.

YOKH'S MEDIA SAVVY LEADER

B6

2. (SBU) Yokh's [REDACTED] eschews the title "leader" ("all Yokh members have an equal stake in the organization"), [REDACTED] he is Yokh's de facto leader. Long involved in politics,

[REDACTED] (NOTE: Not the Popular Front headed by Ali Kerimli, END NOTE). In conversation, he displayed a keen grasp of the academic theories on non-violent political resistance.

[REDACTED] said that the goal of Yokh is to create a revolution by activating the passive parts of society and giving people the tools of non-violent resistance to succeed in revolution. [REDACTED] said he has been in "training" for the past two years for this day, translating books on non-violent struggle into Azeri and establishing connections with other youth movements. He said that Yokh has received no foreign funding other than a \$1000 grant from Freedom House.

B6

3. (SBU) [REDACTED] has worked to develop international contacts and establish media connections. According to [REDACTED] Yokh has linked with other student movements across the region, including such groups as the Serbian "Otpor," Ukrainian "Pora" and the Georgian "Kmara." [REDACTED] himself has traveled frequently to Western European countries such as Norway and Sweden, in an effort to build up name recognition, if not support, among EU organizations. The effectiveness of these connections was demonstrated in May, when [REDACTED] was arrested in the lead-up to an unsanctioned opposition demonstration (ref B), and the story quickly spread to international NGO communities and government officials alike.

4. (SBU) Similarly, Yokh's activities were widely covered in the local media following the Baku police's May 31 arrest of two of its activists for handing out election pamphlets and anti-corruption fliers. The arrest was reported as a police crackdown on the group's activities, in which the two arrested individuals claimed to have been seriously beaten and injured while in police custody. Poloff met with the two activists a week after the event took place. Both individuals said they had been roughed up during the arrest, but otherwise were not physically abused. They were released after several hours of questioning.

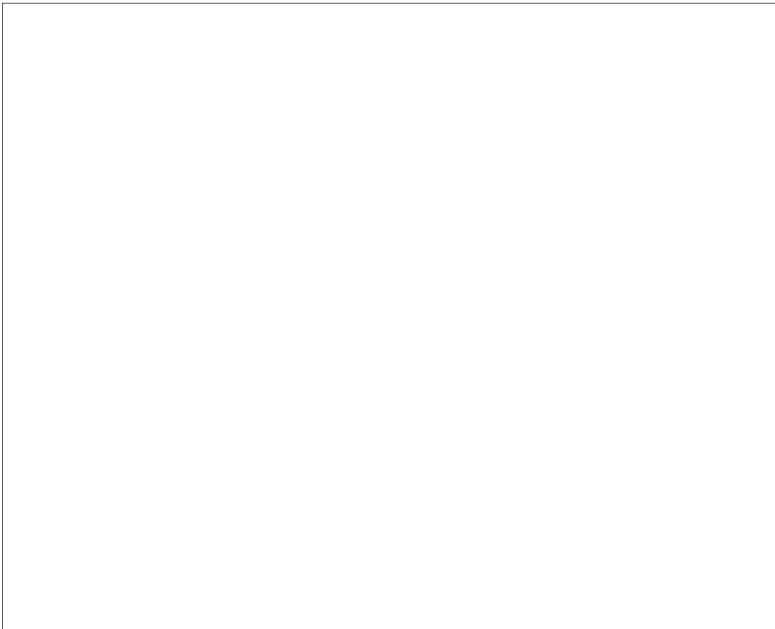
REVOLUTION: PLANNING FOR THE DAY AFTER

5. (SBU) [REDACTED] claimed that Yokh now has 2100 members,

B6

most of whom are under 25. Yokh has used its website (www.yox-net-no.org) to recruit members, and "Yokh!" can be seen spray-painted in green in many parts of Baku. Yokh members have also participated in the sanctioned opposition rallies in Baku. On June 18, for example, approximately 150 Yokh supporters, all wearing matching T-shirts emblazoned

with the green Yokh logo, marched together carrying flags and placards. As a demonstration of their non-violent methods, several of the Yokh supporters rushed the riot police on entry to the rally's venue, only to hand them red carnations (ref a).



1.4(D)
B1

7. (SBU) While [REDACTED] expressed contempt for the current government, he also criticized the opposition parties for lacking strategy and vision -) a reason why he said he is keeping his political movement from developing close ties with any particular party. He claimed that Yokh has no political aims, that its members would not be allowed to run in the November Parliamentary elections, and that its members would not form part of the coalition government. He envisioned Yokh being transformed into a think tank, to serve as a watchdog for the new government.

B6

YENI FIKIR: MORE REVOLUTION



1.4(D)
B1

1.4(D)
B1

9. (SBU) [REDACTED] clearly dismissed the possibility that the November Parliamentary elections could be free and fair, but predicted if they are fair, the Parliament would be filled with new, young faces who would exercise the right of Parliament to be independent) to not accept what he described as the &illegal8 orders of President Aliyev.

B6

COMMENT

10. (C) Yokh clearly has a better-defined strategy and road map for the future, &post-Aliyev8 Azerbaijan, although neither group appears, thus far, to be able to claim it speaks for the disaffected Azeri youth. Yeni Fikir seems to have more sway with disaffected university students, such as those facing unemployment upon graduation and frustrated with the corruption endemic to Azerbaijan,s universities. The leadership of Yokh, on the other hand, seems to represent western-educated youth who are attracted to the more theoretical approach of the group. [REDACTED]

1.4(D)
B1

[REDACTED] Additionally, with its sophisticated website, professional business cards to contacts, complete with a logo designed by a Washington, DC firm, and frequent international travel by its leader, Yokh appears to be anything but a grassroots, cash-strapped organization. Yeni Fikir, on the other hand, seems to have all the hallmark characteristics of a typical &revolutionary8 student movement. While an initial read indicates that neither group is able to amass the large numbers of support they hope for to accomplish their goals, the coming months will reveal the extent of each group,s

appeal.
HARNISH

NNNN